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TERRA TENEBRARUM
LOVE'S JESTBOOK
AND OTHER VERSES

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TERRA TENEBRARUM
LOVE'S JESTBOOK
AND OTHER VERSES

BY WILLIAM KNOX JOHNSON

LONDON: KEGAN PAUL
TRENCH TRÜBNER &
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TO MY OXFORD FRIENDS
THESE VERSES ARE
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Benares, 1897.

NOTE

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TERRA
TENEBRARUM

A

" Tout phénomène est vide ; aucun phénomène n'a de substance propre. Toute substance est vide. La personnalité elle-même est sans substance."

Buddha, tr. St.-Hilaire.

" Terra tenebrosa, et operta mortis caligine : terra miseriae et tenebrarum, ubi umbra mortis, et nullus ordo. . . .
Ut plangam paululum . . . ut glutiam salivam meam ! "

Lib. Job.

" Peu de chose nous console, parce que peu de chose nous afflige."

Pascal.

PERSONALITY

". . . quia fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te." S. Aug. *Conf. i.*

A POOL left far upon the lonely strand
That hears the murmur of the unbounded main ;
A planet gathered from the starry plain,
Yet dark, unvisited o'er gulfs unspanned ;

A thought obscure, for something doth withstand,
Imaged, forgotten, on the Eternal brain ;
Soul of the violin, that would attain
Spheres, yet shall die—unto the master's hand.

So lone, so dim, so vast and passion-fraught
Our being urges from these plangent shores—
Where? To what end? Wherefore? shall vainly ask :

Lord of the morn of Time ! be answer taught,—
The moving rhythm of suns upon their task
O'er these immemorable days of ours !

CIRCUMSTANCE

"THINK ye"—the master spake, "that score who died,
On whom the tower within Siloam fell,
Were sinners more than all whom nought befell?
Rather take heed *ye* perish not, with pride!"

Still the loud roar of Chance o'ertakes the tide
Of frail humanity, resounds the knell
Of purpose firm and error lamentable,—
Chance, which hath wrecked God's world, and God denied!

Thou spirit of little faith! my heart replied,
'Neath the immortal eye where all things dwell
Shall not the victories of each hour be well?—

Ah yet, when most adventurous on the wide
And gossamer highways of thy dreams enskied,
Be not too proud! proud Man most perishable!

"NATURAL SELECTION"

—πόλεμον πατέρα καὶ βασιλέα
καὶ κύριον πάντων—*Heracl. Fr.* 44.

NIGHT'S palace slowly opened to set free
Her shining guest, as charioted in fire,
Of old he sped diurnal, whom each lyre
Hailed Lord of heaven with reverent ecstacy;

Now in his stead rolls one inanimate sea
Of molten flame, fierce, unassuaged, the pyre
Of that which was divine, where vain desire
Consumes itself in secular agony.

So, on the dusk horizon of the mind,
Dawns the orbed world, effulgent, perfect, seen
Equable, as in dreams, shapes sphered afar;

Ask not its inner secrets! lest divined,
Nature unveil, no more a tranquil queen,
Sad umpire in an elemental war!

LUCRETIUS

O TOIL insensate! O o'erlaboured, vain,
Enslaved mortality, on careless skies
Fawning with pitiful dule and sacrifice!
Nay! wilt thou lure high Law, O mage profane?

Thine own anathema, thyself arraign,
Tantalus thirsting o'er the stream that flies!
Roller of self-hewn stones on roads that rise
Sheer and more sheer o'er deep-browed hills of pain!

O sealed and blind! worlds are and worlds shall be
The same,—and yet the same; though thy spar tears
Are fallen unheard amid the strife of Change:

How the flower falls to dust! their loves estrange!
Waif of earth's womb, thrown upon time's hoarse sea,
How even thy song makes wailing in mine ears!

QUALIBUS IN TENEBRIS!

"State contenti umana gente al Quia." *Purg. iii.*

TO sound the Centre of the sphere of things,
Probing the imagery of the illusive brain,—
How much desired—but ah, how much in vain
Pale Knowledge in the void her plummet flings!

Where Thought whirls round and round with wearying wings,
In viewless quest, voicing discordant pain;
As though the deep should answer her refrain,
Or Time commute her perilous wanderings!

Unfathomable secret! who shall read
This moving tapestry of darkness, wrought
With bodiless shapes that change, and strive, and seem?

Who shall persuade us when these fall to nought?
Or who compose this being,—if indeed
Thin Night inwove it on the looms of dream?

PHANTAST

I ASK if far beyond this curtain blind
The sure transgression shall at last disclose
No forms less void than these applauded shows,
No substance of the shadows left behind :

What if, elusive, here but half divined,
The thin chimæras that our hopes transpose,
With all that long reward the Future owes,
Be null ?—O stern Iconoclast of mind !

Nay, credulous Doubt ! who to receive art fain
All spectres of the soul, vague ill supreme !
Leave us imparadised in things that seem,
Make us not sharers of your waking pain !

Nay spare, O spare a few more watches vain
The dear illusions of the Sleeper's dream !

PALLIDA MORS

THE spirit lives, men say, when thew and bone
And all this fleshly house once held so dear,
Are fallen asunder ; as the charioteer
Renews his car and coursers overthrown.

Nay, but in that cold shock which smote them prone,
And froze the rider with precipitate fear,
Shall Death not dwell ? as in this theatre
Some fateful veiled Spectator holds his throne ?

'Tis not the bodily end that chiefly grieves !
Ah, rather the descending will—the frore
Heart bound and numb ! poor house of wintry eaves !

'Tis the slow ebb of soul, that from the shore
Of Personality returning, leaves
The sands unnumbered where it rolled of yore !

"INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY"

I

> "Nam nisi adsint et in profundo aures tuae, quo ibimus? quo clamabimus?" S. Aug. *Conf. lib. xi. 2.*

I DREAMED a dream: for when this flesh was dead,
Death was not death; but the abandoned soul
In time unnumbered, and from pole to pole
Wandered of vastness, fearfully misled.

Upward in quest of home she vainly sped,
Beneath beheld grey latitudes unroll
Their starless wild; beyond, the Formless Whole
Pale armaments of nothingness outspread.

Without, within, dull deeps unplumbed, unknown
She saw, the shadow of Silence sentinel:

Horror gat hold—she sank, yea overthrown
Shuddered through dissolute voids immeasurable,

Crying on paths of uncompanioned hell
"Hear me, ah God!" un-neared, annulled—alone.

II

"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" S. Paul, *Rom. vii.*

NAY! who shall snatch them from this Spirit's snare
Of life, if sleep be mockery, and the grave
But one last disillusion,—who shall save?
Spare them, O God, spare the quick souls of men!

O give them end! lull down that piteous strife,
Feud within feud of souls with selves that war,
Trapped in the abyss, mist-hemmed on crags sublime:
Scatter them not from lodgeless life to life
O'er all thine alps and passages of time,
Strange in all worlds, and dark on every star!

Comfort, O Soul! since we are twain, and far
Shall sever unpursued where dead Pasts dwell.
Nay, who am I, that thus can say farewell?
Or what art thou to meet—and when? or where?

MUNERA PULVERIS

WHAT though the proper soul pass unrenewed?
And common dissolution with fierce breath
Dispel the mean corporeal will that saith
"Ha, with eternity I stand endued!"

Yet Time forbids the reawakening rude;
Night herits unawares, Sleep pardoneth
The dull annunciation of stern Death,
And summons of deciduous certitude.

'Tis well: thou shalt be—all that thou hast been.
Friends, lovers, the world is thine, whate'er man can;
Spurn not life's board, nor aught life's gods bestow.

Babble not thou, home-journeying Ithacan,
"I have seen many lands; I too have seen
A land none knows, and no man cares to know.

QUAMDIU DOMINE!

(ON A PICTURE BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET)

"The plowers plowed upon my back; and made long furrows." *Ps. cxxix.*

" Perche tanto sorriso del cielo
Sulla terra del vile dolor?"
G. B. Niccolini. *Giov. da Proc.*

MIRAGE of morn, and slow continuous eve,
Reiterant splendours of the golden main!
Mockery of ardent suns that rise and wane
On dark Despair bowed down beyond reprieve!

Whence that high calm in heaven? shall Hope retrieve
The souls of men outpoured? shall light refrain
Dusk's slow procession o'er yon prostrate plain
Whose skies on that dull toil out-rolled can grieve?

How long, sad Mother of God—behold o'erthrown
Thy form divine! the woe that makes no moan
Thou knewest, the prayer forlorn no lips can say:

Is there any sorrow like unto their sorrow?
Child, even as Yesterday shall be To-morrow,
Their days to come more weary than these to-day.

COMPENSATION

WITH you, 'tis well. But what with these, who turn
Dull eyes of prayer to skies that shall refuse?
Whose days are freights of pain, and whom disuse
Of hope hath made the lore of smiles unlearn?

These do fierce worlds un-Galilean spurn,
Buffet, spue forth, the Master once did choose;
All that shall be—their all! lo, none renews!
Who shall assuage these their defeat forlorn?

O ye who have endured! surcease shall come,
When darkness leads above that gulf extreme
Ye fain would ford, but where no ford is o'er:

Then shall the Angel of the oblivious stream
Wan lips asperse, and all that woe be dumb,
Pain's hour be overpast, yea, time for evermore.

THE KINGDOM OF SLEEP

BEYOND the wide and wandering verge of land
Whose seas are silence, and its streets are dream,
They throng, the vague and myriad-laden stream,
Where twilight falls about the encircling strand;

Queen of this realm, whence sad remembrance banned
Troubles no more, with tender sway supreme
Passion long-tost afar and pain extreme
She soothes with spirit of pure and calm command.

So many times they come about her knees,
Craving the poppy from her lustrous hair,
That she, beholding how they find no ease,

Nor flee the stress in waking, anywhere,
Breathes at the last for ever her kiss of peace,
Charm against sorrow, and joy, and slow despair.

TERRA TENEBRARUM

"è il più basso loco e il più oscuro,
E il più lontan dal ciel che tutto gira."

Inf. ix.

I SAW the low earth whizzing round its track,
As 'twere a soul pursued beyond repose ;
Here scathed in flame, here clenched with arctic snows,
Urgent in vain, yet looking never back :

Round it the perilous pit and smoky rack
Rolled to the Night of naught no spirit knows ;
Wall upon wall of swallowing shades that close
Suns in their gulfs that glimmer, eyelessly black.

Time was not there, save when with alien tone
Out of that dust to skies laid waste and stern
A sound of burdens swam through space eterne,
Laughter and tears of lives that make their moan ;

Then silence through æons fell—round the world's return
On the endless journey involved fleeing alone.

THE INUTILITY OF EFFORT?

"altro che giuoco
Son l'opre de' mortali? ed è men vano
Della menzogna il vero?"

OFT, in the very stress of action, moves
Some dread arch-enemy within us, bold
To try the tortuous reason, and to hold
Him monarch of those labyrinthine groves:

Fool! he doth whisper, *shall the Night restore?*
Thee the wan wastes of Nothingness enfold:
Wherefore, possess thy soul! and we behold
Ourselves alone; and fail, and strive no more!

So, in the eddying battle's mid-most roar
Hewing for God and home, the warrior pale
Some shape un-named sees stark before him stand:

The heart no foe had ever made to quail
Sinks smitten prone, and on the thunderous floor
Slow from his pulseless arm he drops the tremulous
brand.

THE DISEASE OF WILL

"Quid sumus? et quidnam victuri gignimur?"

WHAT is it most shall cause the soul despond?
Bow down, yea tremble for what it shall
become?
'Tis not Necessity, 'tis not the dumb
Armies of God, nor death's inveterate bond.

No! 'tis this slow and loathed disease, beyond
Promise of cure, which can the Will benumb,
Crucify, rack in hourly martyrdom
The soul—within dishonoured, and self-shunned.

So, before Ilium doomed, the assault of harm
Long years recoiled; the dire Achæan hate
Scamander barred, till that discounselled swarm

Madly withdrew within the Scæan gate
The ambushed war,—*then* ruin smote the state,
The Tower of Priam fell, deep swathed in storm

OPPORTUNITY

I CANNOT stay; for the resistless streams
Carry me whence I know not, and alas,
Whither I would not go: and none repass
Ever, save by the desolate way of dreams!

Nay! what is it to thee? and wherefore gaze
With eyes that mirror the orbed worlds of pain?
Shalt Thou be repossessed, or I obtain
One moment thus from the revolving days?

Upbraid me not: for all these things I know:
I know the number of the hours outcast;
What might have been; and the defrauded years:

I too might weep, were mine not frozen tears;
Could I not hear a stern voice, still and slow,
Too late! too late! the dial-hand is past!

VESTIGIA RETRORSUM

WHEN these look backward from the road of shame,
And feel the icy breath of heights declined
Blow vast and drear o'er all that tract behind,
With passage of its scorn from whence they came ;

Think you with hollow laughter these disclaim
Yon purple summits to bright skies inclined ?
That ruining twilight blinds the eyes of mind ?
Or feet drawn down forget the aspiring aim ?

Not so : nay, they shall strive ! in battle of prayer
Their agonised feet must urge ; with futile tears
They wail abandoned, whom no eye discerns.

Lost—let them wail ! the slough hath spread its snare !
Lost, lost ! thrice lost ! the Night hath stopped her ears :
Dusk on their track descends : not one returns.

QUANTIS ON DIFFETIVI !

LONG the soul strove to see, yet still was blind.
I stood in forums where the sages great
Expounded Cause and Time, Free-will and Fate,
And who hath power to loose, and who to bind :

These were the sovran monarchs of the mind,
Ruling from cloudy thrones rebel debate ;
And much decreed they, much could formulate,
Yet nothing that the soul desired to find.

And last I saw where one taught, humbler far
Than those stern doctors, but what he might show
Few, few that understand, and few that hear ;

His voice unanswered rang remote and clear,
Work ! for night cometh, sky, and silent star,
Beyond I know not, neither shall ye know.

ON MICHELANGELO'S "DAWN"—SAN LORENZO

"Quante volte implorata
Morte! sei tu. . . .
Quante la sera, e quante
Abbandonando all'alba il corpo stanco,
Sè beato chiamò s'indi giammai
Non rilevasse il fianco,
Nè tornasse a veder l'amara luce!"

AH God, ah God! grant me a little to turn
Once more as one long dead, whom time disdains!
Shamed and bowed down, whom thy remembered pains
No more remember, nor thine eyes discern.

Nay, close thy pitiless lids, thine orbs that burn
Deeper than fire, thy sulphurous skies' red rains,
Kindling the slow life in these agonised veins,
Lest all past bondage of dead days return!

ON MICHELANGELO'S "DAWN"—SAN LORENZO

Because of tears amid the shapes of sleep
I cried erewhile, Would God that it were day!
Now let night tarry, and thy light decay,

For none hath strength who wakes anon to weep.
Thine arm is terrible, thine ire is deep:
Let silence hold me now, let slumber slay!

ON THE ENGRAVING OF "MELANCHOLY," BY ALBERT DURER

"Non enim abundantia scientiae, sed sensus et gustus rerum interior desiderium animae replere solet."
Ign. Loyola, *Exercit. Spirit.*

NAY, call her if you will! she will not hear!
So many ages hath she called in vain,
Hearing no sound of solace for her pain,
That now, though Death should call her, she would not hear!

Round her lie wrecks of Knowledge,—scroll and sphere,
Compass and horologe, and scale and plane:
Long since all these she knows, and knows in vain;
Shadows of things which are, and are not here.

The stars pass by, the veiled moons wait and wane;
The leaden days decline; in tideless flow
The hoarse sea murmurs round her twilight home:

She knows no more if all these things be so;
Those far eyes see not, nor their deeps retain
Joy of past years, nor hope for years to come.

CALM

AFTER long journeying methought I past
Beyond the utmost verge, where men in vain
Uphold their labouring feet, until at last
An ocean wide outspread, a luminous plain,

On whose shore, tideless, sounded no refrain
Of waves recurrent, sea-marge overpast,
Nor ever mingled there, sublime and vast,
The winds of Pleasure with the foam of Pain.

Afar I saw, on heights and deeps enthroned,
A Form dispassionate, eyes fixed afar,
Whose gaze immutable were all men's balm :

The voids unplumbed beyond the extremest star
Rolled, from whose bosom reached a voice profound,
" Of no man am I known : Gods call me CALM."

LUNA

O FEVERED race of mortals, learn of me.
I too have wandered with fierce heart of fire
Aimless through heights and deeps, who did aspire
To paths far other than the paths ye see ;

Yet I too bowed unto a wise decree
Which stilled my rebel being, did require
That I should yield up all of my desire,
Finding high freedom in a sphere unfree.

I swerve not, neither stay, for I fulfil
The law of my own being, clear and known ;

No strife ignoble of divided will
Frets me, withdrawn unto one goal alone ;

Deep through the dusk abysses, sheer and still,
I drink the light from light's eternal throne.

LAST WORD

FULL well I know that we have fought in vain,
That night must fall, and darkness makes an end:
Into the Outer Dark we too must wend,
And at the last we shall not aught attain.

Forward! the eddying battle sweeps the plain!
This league of circumstance, these Powers of Air
Dauntless the captain of our host, Despair
Fronts,—to charge ours, and with Despair be slain.

Onward! and onward yet! yea, thrice again
Blow, bugles, blow! the iron eyes of Hell
Shall weep, beholding our immortal pain!

Fall, and fall back, and fall immemorable,
But faltering not, not lying, "all is well"—
O ardent souls! in vain! in vain! in vain!

SIGNA SEVERA

HOW steadfast, in these steely plains of Heaven
Stands marshalled this bright army manifold
While through the ranks, arrayed in purer gold,
Move silently the high-commissioned Seven :

They in whose charge the eternal watchword given
Welds the embattled host ; for from of old
These face to face the Sun of things behold,
Guardians of Law wherewith they have not striven.

Servants sublime, in federal patience sure !
Who know no more than that your paths are known ;
Serene above man's clamouring waste of pain !

O teach us, while our little lives endure,
Before we end, to lose ourselves alone,
Before Death finds us, having lived in vain !

AT THE GRAVE OF MANGAN[1]

I

DEEP-BREATHING noon, aerial, clear,
The hills, the sea ;
Soft fall the dappled lights, and here
Sweet freedoms be !

Slow wind the wreathèd shores of foam,
Far yonder, fair,
Shimmers the broad ascending dome
Of Ben Edair.

Southward the mountains roll, serene
Shanganagh lies,
Queen of the vales of Eirinn, queen
To homaging skies.

Cloud-capt, abrupt, austerely grand,
Colléagued with years,
Silent in serried phalanx stand
The Golden Spears.[2]

II

There is no clamour on the skies
Where nations weep,
Though stars fall darkward, though hope dies
Tranquil they keep.

Strange claustral silence folds him round,
Whose songs complain
With passion shaken and the sound
Of grief's disdain!

Yet here, though thin and faint pursues
His city's roar,
Through the yew-pillared avenues
From the sea shore,

At night, far-borne, the rolling surge
Of ocean moans,
With anthem to his echoing dirge
And homeless tones.

So surged his heart round Innisfail,
And in his ears
The Waves of Omen[3] smote with wail
A thousand years:

So let him sleep who so hath sung
In Innisfail
Their hearts that on the storm are flung,
The stormy Gael!

LAMENT FOR AN EXILE

(DYING AT SEA)

I

LET the sands be under him,
  The seas sweep over!
Him shall the homeless wave
  Receive and cover:
The earth was foe to him,
  Let the sea be lover!

II

Where shall he rest him now,
  The restless-hearted?
Low is the place of home,
  The splendour departed:
Let doom break over him,
  The broken-hearted!

III

Let the loud seas thunder here,
  His word was spoken :
He broke them upon the land,
  And on the land was broken.
The dark winds over him—
  Be the dark his token !

IV

Far in the ocean lone,
  In surge and swelling,
Wave the branched darkling arms
  Of the roof of his dwelling ;
Let the surge of the sea sway o'er
  Battle foretelling.

V

For him no Dune of kings,
  Not the brooding willow !
Let the vain rain beat above
  The salt wan billow !
The echoing sleep be his,
  The moving pillow !

WILLY GILLILAND[4]

(ULSTER)

O WHERE, O where shall Willy be?
Since Willy crossed the wandering sea
By dusk and day he's fain to flee,
Willy, Willy Gilliland!

Far, far across the sea
To Eirinn from his ain Countrie,
But who will bring him back to me,
Willy, Willy Gilliland?

O far and far must Willy roam,
For the red men on the hills have clomb,
He sees them pass his caverned home,
Willy, Willy Gilliland!
Far, far &c.

By night he came across the moor,
By night he left the shieling door,
He housed, *mavrone*, where none sought o'er,
Willy, Willy Gilliland!
Far, far &c.

He starts in sleep, and hears the ban
From the rocky shelf of little span,
Or pillow of the canavan,[5]
Willy, Willy Gilliland!

Far, far beyond the sea
They fired his kirk and his roof-tree;
Eirinn, be his ain Countrie!
Willy, Willy Gilliland!

O far and farther must he roam!
The mountain wide his restless home!
I hear his voice at every gloam,
Willy, Willy Gilliland!
Far, far &c.

I whisper low: there's only blown
The slow wind from the hills in moan.
My heart is heavy, *ullagone!*
Willy, Willy Gilliland!

Far, far across the sea
To Eirinn from his own Countrie,
But who will bring him back to me,
Willy, Willy Gilliland?

AN ANNIVERSARY

HOW sweetly-keen, how stirred the air !
The woods are thrilled at touch of spring ;
Along the road from Château Vert
Gaily the thrushes sing.

No stranger here I come to-day !
I know the river winding slow,
This haze of blue, with green and gray ;
And all the flowers I know.

With you I plucked them ; now, alone.
The slope is starred with shaken flame !
Three times the daffodils have blown
Since we together came.

A fire was in our souls ; we spoke
Of fate, the evil reign of things ;
How good men ever spurn the yoke
That tyrant Nature brings.

"She knows no God : her law is hate.
  Brave deed and duty still remain ;
Justice and Love we must create,
  Whose quest of Love is vain."

My hope was set across the seas ;
  I'd till a land with freer men ;
Where greed no more the heart should freeze,
  And Pity rule again.

In widening current from our shore
  The great gulf-stream of joy should flow ;
Nations, their lethargy past o'er,
  Should feel the answering glow !

Three years ! and under dusking skies
  To-night you cross the stream with me.
I can not turn, those ardent eyes,
  That eager mien to see.

I dare not look upon your face !
  Our dreams I sold for daily bread !
I mingle in the accursed race,
  Dead—with the living dead !

Yet hear!—ah no! far northward now
    In Aran of the mighty wave
The thunder of the surges slow
    Rolls round your ocean grave.

High on the rocky spur you lie,
    A splendour floods the solemn west,
The voices of the sea go by,
    And Night is thine, and rest.

ASTROPHIL

FAREWELL; farewell! thy star recedes!
The strenuous murmur of cold foam
Rolls far below; the south strait leads,
The spirits of the wind say, Come!

Thou too art fugitive; must bend
To sequence strange of dreaming Mind;
Must bring thy natural reign to end,
And leave each arc of sky behind.

Thou also art alone; the gyves
Of soul upon thy soul are bound,
Thee too some inborne mandate drives,
Time's exile, into voids unsunned.

For me unsunned! yet haply there
Thy wilful orbit thou shalt curve
'Mid suns unknown; or in the glare
Of self insphered, thyself subserve.

Yes, thou art bright, where'er thou shine!
  Self-poised, thy lamp is not less rare.
Now in my dark I shall divine
  No ray of all thy rays elsewhere.

"Peace: let the orb of Time return.
  Tho' now thy star in ocean set,
Once more the sapphire vault shall burn,
  And the boon Night can not forget."

So cries the Comforter of soul:
  But my soul knows, presaging change,
One star is past beyond control;
  One soul the fields of dusk estrange.

THE IDEAL

DEEP in the unquiet sea
The moon shines clear.
In all its chambers she
Seems far, yet near.
Hers too the spheral throne,
The star-like brow ;
But cold is the silver moon,
And cold art Thou !

With silver chains she draws the deep,
And holds him thrall :
She moves, a dream amid his sleep,
Pale, mystical :
Wide round the echoing world
He seeks in vain ;
Only in night impearled
She still doth reign.

So from this loud heart-surge
  To thy still air
The moving waters urge,
  And habit there :
Yet ah, in the splendour of dreams
  Where thou art seen,
The unbridged darkness seems
  To roll between !

PAST AND FUTURE

IN the deep-folded bosom of past time
How many ages sleep, their pride forgone!
And what but sleep have all their labours won?
The world is weary, nor would farther climb!

So say you, Friend: were it not well replied—
Few are the years man hath made Earth his home;
Vast, vast the heights whereon man's soul hath clomb;
Where one hath stood supreme, our souls abide?

And happier he, who still shall reverence keep
For the high Past, yet who far more reveres
Ages unborn, and unforegathered years
With infinite yearning o'er their lifeless sleep;

Whom days to be, out of these days that wane,
Call, and call evermore, nor call in vain!

MILAN CATHEDRAL

"Quaerite quod quaeritis, sed ibi non est ubi quaeritis!"
S. Aug. *Conf.*

ARE ye too of the world?
Ye also, delicate strains and subtle hopes,
Suasively drest,—are ye the world's allies?
Ye too of the gross league that lies
In wait collusive, with dusk standards furled,
Lest we should see, and know
Them far for friend or foe?
Here, in the dimness cool, from the outer glare
An hour relieved, not even here withdrawn?
And, as the traveller gropes
About these aisles with unaccustomed eyes,
Sees not at first, but knows the cooler air
Laden with odours and a grateful calm;
Then wakes to garrulous crowds, sleek priests that yawn
Stale iterations of what once was prayer,
Far other hearts brought balm,
So enters here the soul, and wakens so?

O guides of impotent sight !
Who fling your veil opaque across the stars,
Roofing them out with gloom !
The stars, whose equal light—
Calm in their heaven with commutual sway—
Had almost shewn us day,
And nigh dissolved the darkness of our night !
Deep through these dim-walled tombs we faltering go :
Ye with your lanterns wheresoe'er ye turn
Show naught but shadows, and these caverns know
Only the echoes of our feet forlorn !
Vain eyeless prisoners of a little room,
Your tapers flame not, nor the lamps of heaven may !

But voices from these columns seem to say,
Seekers, why seek ye still what none may seek,
And seeking find,—the human heart is weak !
Why in the fight forlorn bear fruitless scars ?
From all these wars
Urged by the militant brain what promised land ?
Or who requites you of your wearying quest ?
Turn ye, return unto these havens blest,
Easing tired hearts, and rest !

So spirits whisper that inhabit here,—
Such mockery through these solemn arches rolls !—
And if they may, instil
Some drug oblivious in the listening ear,
Some numb narcotic in the will,
And we forget—and nevermore possess our souls !

Or it may even be,
Desperate of what once was our desire,
We bargain with our better selves, conspire
To cheat our souls of the one thing they knew
Of all they did inquire,
That no Lie can be true !
No, though a spirit from heaven shall be the liar !

For ye, like your own temples, are dis-spread ;
Not gathered upward, ah, ye soar not high !
Not with a stern endeavour
Would ye from earth dissever,
Upreaching from your comfortable bed !
Are these indeed his litanies, and are these
His signs and tokens that ye seek him by ?
And have your hymns the music of the seas,
Your fane the splendour of his canopied sky.

Nathless ye must uplift your passionate hands,
Fettering the universal spirit
In forms fantastic, with material bands!
Or others will descry,
Penurious habitants of barren lands,
A city incorruptible,
And ultimate mansions that the poor inherit:
And because all the strands
Of Time are stretched to breaking, and dispel,
Life's thread unbroken must foresee,
And for the soul an infinite citadel,
Where all is well;
Far beyond space, eternal,
Where never gloom nocturnal
Broods, nor is any grieving of the sea.

Dreamers of dreams! vain phantoms of their dreams!
Whose fitful life is not the life it seems!

But Thou, O shadowy-throned, transcendent Mind,
Through these illimitable inmost deeps divined,
Here, if not otherwhere enshrined!
God not of wrath nor ruth, thou Spirit of awe!
Not cumbered, as man, unfree,

Victim of personality,
Eternal pillar of the scales of truth,
Inviolate harmony of law and law !
O thou who wert before the ages ran !
Enduring, though the flying dust of man
Goes down, when thou with stars shalt dwell alone :
Let it be mine, whom thy just worlds dethrone,
Fretless to feel thy mighty span !
Yea ! scattered as chaff, as moments overthrown,
By wandering change on winds of silence blown,
Steadfast the immortal order clear to scan !

NEAPOLITAN SONNETS

VOX HOMINIS

DUOMO

"Ipsi peribunt." *Ps. cii.*

DARK are these outer portals, these that lead
To chambers marvellous, courts built of light!
Yet here, ye say, sole entry; by such rite
Alone made worthy, man receives the meed,

Lord of immortal empire. Slow to heed
Alas, are men; and in their stubborn sight
The little letter of your law is slight,
O scribes and pharisees of church and creed!

Not on such wise answered the eastern seer
When poor men sought strange splendours at his hand,
Beside the sultry Galilean sea;

No crowns were his, no vain imagined land;
Only the voice of yearning smote each ear—
The Kingdom is within you. Follow me!

VOX DEI

MONTE VESUVIO

"Tu autem permanes." *Ps. cii.*

HERE fiery Spirit thunders sterner law!
So, on the mount of Sinai, Israel's Lord
Spoke in columnar flame; from whom implored
The tremulous people moved afar for awe:

A cloud encompassed him, and none that saw
The fierce diurnal glory sight abhorred,
Save Moses; him when the dread mount restored,
None from his face that durst the veil withdraw

Round them rolled homeless sand. Also the sea
Circles with vasty silence. Yet I hear
A voice in unison, afar, obscure;

As in yon sweep of Form,[6] where thou shalt see
The soul of reconcilement, in whose ear
Sounds deep annunciation of things sure.

VERBUM MUNDI

A WORDSWORTHIAN IN NAPLES BAY

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." *S. John iv.*

SOME ageless peace can even here embalm
The living soul in its unquiet day.
So, at this hour, cypress and flower-like palm
Image themselves, and westward, far away,

Sun, slender moon and star unite to say
Their chorussed hymn, their glad and ageless psalm;
The skies bow down, beholding in the bay
The vast reflection of their luminous calm.

Thou, who dost summon splendour round thy throne!
Spirit, whom stars inscrutable enshrine,
Denied, implored, reviled, besought with tears!

Though no one word through all the labouring years
Trouble thy voiceless home, art thou less known?
Or is thy majesty the less divine?

BALLADE OF THE DUSTY END OF ALL THINGS

Cogitavi dies antiquos, et annos aeternos in mente habui.

OUT of the Night, where the Void lies dead,
Where suns are spent, where the fire-flies glow,
The passing of all things past and sped
Sways the silences to and fro.
Our hours and ears are heavy, I trow,
The white flame flies, but the poppy clings;
Sleep a little, and even so!
Dust, and dreams—and an end of Things!

Who shall number them? Past and fled
Wings of the wind and feet of the snow
Carry them soundless, bodiless, shed,
Darkened hosts of the ghosts that go:
Watchman, what of the night? and lo,
What star is left from thy Tower that swings?
To-night, and To-morrow, and Long Ago
Dust, and dreams—and an end of Things!

BALLADE OF THE DUSTY END OF ALL THINGS

Dead men under the clay we tread—
  But their tongues are dumb, and their lips laid low,
And they stare with a vacant stare o'erhead,
  For we lied our lies to them : now they know
Men reap the Night from the dreams they sow,
  Where the lean grey Worm and the Dusk are kings :
Round them circle the shadows slow,
  Dust, and dreams—and an end of Things !

Waifs, be comforted ! all is said !
  The nightingale murmurs, the roses blow ;
The soul is steadfast, her task is spread ;
  The ships sail seaward ; the sweet streams flow !
If the heart be passion and overthrow
  Shall Love fail utterly ? Ay—and No—
(Prophets, prophesy smooth and low ;
  For the song of the singer breaks as he sings)
Yea ! and Forever ! and even so !
  Dust, and dreams—and an end of Things !

ENVOY

Prince of Darkness, whose path we strow,
  The heart of thy harp-player weeps in the strings.
Cry aloud to your idols, Woe !
  Dust, and Dreams—and an End of Things !

BALLADE OF DEAD GODS

"But thou art the same." *Ps. cii.*

WHERE are the Gods that of old time made
Kings to follow them, lords ensue?
Pæan APOLLO, the bright, who played,
And Tears from all the Muses drew?
THOR the Thunderer, FREYA true,
He whom in Gath none might uphold?
BAAL, whom Priests of YAH o'erthrew?
Death is God of the gods of old!

BALDER the beautiful, and the Maid
ARTEMIS, lover whom Latmos knew?
PALLAS ATHENE, whom none gainsaid,
AURORA, whose dwelling the years renew?
ASTARTE, COTTYTO, that Princes slew?
Strong POSEIDON, and HERMES bold?—
All are crowned, but crowned with Yew!
Death is God of the gods of old.

All are silent; all are stayed:
  In DIS' dark hall now all must sue;
Yet PAN'S pale wraith haunts mere and glade;
  And when the eyes of maidens woo
Cnidus regains her seas of blue,
  Once more the PAPHIAN QUEEN is told;
Else is none of that retinue,
  Death is God of the gods of old!

ENVOY

Priest; that prayest at altars new,
  The scroll of doom is half unrolled;
Fate is Lord of the flowers that blew,
  Death is God of the gods of old!

PRIEZ POUR ELLE

PRIEZ pour Elle! her life was like the rose,
More full, more sweet than any flower that blows;
All of her life was laughter; who can tell
Whether of all glad things this were not well—
Following the river winged with light that flows?

Say, what is loveliest, truest? what man knows?
Whence are these shadows thrown athwart our shows?—
All was her toy divine: she could compel:
Priez pour Elle!

Past through the storm, familiar with the snows,
All of that pride of life she too foregoes.
Dead amaranth girdles her, pale asphodel:
Let no word fall less than the tears that fell.
Who shall invade, perturb this great repose?—
Priez pour Elle!

RONDEAU

FROM THE (PSEUDO) FRENCH

"It is a mark of man's early ingenuity . . . to seek complexity where you would expect simplicity." *A. Lang.*

PROVENÇAL Rhymes, my Bard, entwine—
Occult, ingenious, serpentine!
On Villon, Voiture, pray bestow
Politest flattery,—point the toe
Most subtilly, as you incline!

How Andrew, Austin, Edmund shine
In *Pantoum, Kyrielle, Sestine!*
Villanelle, Virelai Nouveau—
Provençal Rhymes?

Dear Gallic Muse, so superfine!
Pardon! since Keats grows byzantine!
Our Wordsworths, Miltons,—they shall go
To Banville, d'Orléans, Marot,
For wondrous nothings, line on line,
Provençal Rhymes!

AN EPITAPH

THOU hast regained that calm august and free
The communal Mother keeps, who bids us roam
And play awhile at Personality,
And, wearied of the play, recalls us home.

A TRAVELLER'S GRAVE

SLEEP, faring well! for thou didst go
  Through icy lands, o'er stormy seas;
And where the Illyrian breezes blow,
  And 'neath the rainy Hyades.

Thou askedst not repose; but now
  By wandering tides dost gladly rest;
A stone is at thy quiet brow,
  A stone upon thy breast.

NIGHT ON HOWTH HEAD

HERE more than all it seems
That Nature shares the unquiet life of man
Sadder by far than wind on moonless leas,
And how more desperate than human tears,
Here each sea hurtles on opponent seas,
Each aimless, voicing its regretful dreams
Of something long gone by, part of some perfect plan
A myriad enemies in yon starry spears
Fronting their recklessness, yet with these
A law prevails, as even, men say, with man.

But is theirs also a rule of strife,
A scheme of difference, and a bond of woe?
Souls most disquieted, whom God doth show
In unattainable heaven his glass of calm?
As in man's sedulous breast
Gathers with vaster passion their tide updrawn?
Must these with hope God-set, inappeasable,
Surge round the shadowy world,

And in the house of darkness moan, and from beyond
the dawn?
Unto these too, despite that clamour hurled
To skies unalterable,
Their road is set, a lodgeless journey from home?
And in their eyes are faces cloudy, ephemeral,
Shadows against eternity,
And in their ears
Hazardous ebb, and godless flux of Change?
To these are things familiar things most strange?
Souls greatly in distress,
Most vagabond and most loverless,
Are all their ways the ways of pain?
The coasts they seek a vapour bodiless—
Lovers of God, but not with interchange—
Formed to desire, yet fashioned not to attain,
And most unutterably alone?

She will give answer, Nature reticent,
And that most cold inhabitant of scorn,
Voice of the dark o'er-canopied hills,
Or thunderous doom round the imprisoned poles.
Here, in her hour of weakness,
Remembering here gladness gone by, laid dumb—

Listen ! it is her speech, this slow refrain,
How perishable grown and tremulous,
Importunate, even as wingless words with us,
As it were a city's voice, of popular pain !
Listen—in night impenetrable,
Alien, and most impenetrably forlorn,
Tempestuous masters of her long distress
Goad her immortal spirit ; she must stray
Before fatality's sublime array,
Never escaping the shaft of mutableness
(The million deaths of the moment that must atone !)
Nor Time, the arrow of the eternal bow.
Afar, in solitary hours,
Deep through her oceans with articulate moan
She calls from cave to cave of adamant shores ;
And through the entrammelled winds
She wails abandoned over her desert places.

Proud and alone ! for when the ceaseless orb
Out of the shadowy dusk once more is flung
These floods regain their accent equable,
Calmer monotony becomes their own.
Then the pained nocturn ends ; her spirit recedes ;
This veil of darkness falls ; then morning finds

Those eyes composed, finds her with countenance
stern
Coldly enthroned amid her cloudy mountains;
And we, her children, hardly who behold
Her aspect distance-dim, occult, severe,
Whose voices echo in her courts unanswered,
Or icily about her peaks are thrown,
We to the habitable plains descend,
Saying, We have not seen, but faintly heard
Fabulous rumour, speech that seemed our own!

II

No, not thine is repose,
Not thine, O Nature, is calm!
Not thine, as wistful, searching poets have sung,
An accent more sure than our own!
Not thine—as the prophets feigned
In stony Horeb, or where
Through broad oaken galleries,
Balmy Illyrian breezes
Breathed o'er Dodona—
Not thine the oracles!
Not thine the Law!

III

Yet whence the majesty?
Whence the charm?

Whence, far, far north, under the brooding pine
Sprung from their silent floor;
Deep in that porchless home
Whose pillars each new dawn incarnadines,
Where never voices of the earth have clomb—
Visits the soul a mighty power?
For there the vague and airy syllables
Pause not of winds low-murmuring magic spells.
Them a great longing thrills
Southward to see the yellow-swaying daffodils.
But still amid those stirless roofs there float
Phantasmal watchers out of realms remote,
Most vigilant keepers of sealed secrets dumb;
And in the silent night their shining eyes
Spangle the house of darkness where they rise,
Yet with the noiseless morning they shall come!

Whence, by some timeless river of aging lands
Where under glittering skies
Lie giant sepulchres raised by myriad hands,

And temples buried in the eddying sands
Man's gods forgot immortalise!
Whence breathes that air as of a watcher sure,
Higher than hills by guardian sources far,
Above the seasons in their circling stations,
The slow precession of the unstable stars,
And dissoluble constellations?
Before whom brilliance of a thousand nations
Swaying their empires secular,—
World after wastrel world's investiture!—
Lightens and vanishes, nenuphars
Gaudily gone on the channel of generations:
Whence is that sense of Life above pulsations,
And mortal hope of an order that shall endure?

IV

How vainly, fruitlessly,
Ye sweep against the adamant, tired waves,
Whose fluctuate strife can never but be vain!
The unavailing race of man, which raves
Round the remorseless headlands of its destiny
Hath never given voice to greater pain.

Ah ! and how good to sleep,
Calm, far below the wastes of striving foam,
With ears unvext by harsh assailant roar !
Where in a hundred ages once should come,
Shadowing the sapphire floor,
Like some sea-God surveying all his deep,
A galleon downward, sails once set for home !

LOVE'S JEST-BOOK

BEING PASSAGES OUT OF
A SONNET-HISTORY
ENTITLED "THE EGOIST
AND HIS ALTER EGO"

I

PROLOGUE

IF man could glass, in vision still and pure,
The face of Beauty throned on shapes of change,
Her air partake in calm, her time endure,
Co-equal with his soul's eternal range ;

Then were man's quest of joy far more austere,
His spirit as deity's, whose eye creates
Bodily forms remote in radiant sphere,
Sons of his love, whose course he contemplates :

But he, disquieted, whom haste of day
Agitates, seeing he shall surcease to be,
Knows all foregoers of a like decay,
Drawing brief breath in death's expectancy ;

He seeks one stay in time, one hour alone,
Mingling his temporal being with their own.

II

IN LIMINE

SOFT, soft! O Traveller strayed within Love's land,
These are the courts grass-grown where silence dwells;
And by the marble marge of unstirred wells,
Trodden the mazy dream, Sleep stills his wand.

It was a palace once: a queen beyond
Homage made progress there: her words were spells.
But she passed forth in time of asphodels,
Love's was the least of realms in her command.

Sleep, sleep, pale Days! only, when flowers are strown,
Once, when the dial shades the hour she came,
Let viewless winds thridding their homeless zone

Waken the shadowy pools to starry flame;
Be round the dim arcades her fabled name
With wizard murmuring of lost music blown!

III

AMOUR PASSAGER !

WHEN I recall Time's tedious overthrow,
The pride of seasons that must stoop to change ;
How no availing auguries foreshow
Ere Night be near, that shall our days estrange ;

When I remember how resplendent June
Last year made mockery of the proud-pied spring,
How the sure amber-eyed autumnal moon
Saw June unparadised, no choir to sing :—

That all the riches of earth's sight and sound
Are but base coinage of the merchant sense ;
How life flies low upon a little ground,
And yet outlasts its poor magnificence ;

O Love ! I dare not set a love of ours
Above the passage of the imperious Hours !

IV

HER PRAISE

O FOR a tongue to praise thee as thou art !
That all this slow incredulous world might find
That vast munificence of human heart,
In thee that noble constancy of mind !

It is not that the eyes of men are blind,
But thou, being loftier, must dwell apart.
How teach the groundlings of the harbour mart
The splendour of the spaces of the wind !

Heaven hath a messenger within her voice,
Going before all worlds with jubilee !
The shawms and psalteries of wind and sea
Answer her, cry aloud, Rejoice, rejoice !

Their vasty diapason with the noise
Of water-springs commingling minstrelsy !

V

THE PROPERTY OF BEAUTY

THE splendour of thy beauty is thine own!
And none shall slander it with false compare.
Not of some moon-swept ocean—thine alone
Those deep dark waves, that surf of golden hair!

Where is the parallel of truth extreme?
For not the lily's is thy poise, but thine.
Starred isles of glory in deep seas of dream,—
No, no—these are thine eyes, divine—nay, thine!

Ay me, yet there some sad invasion seen
A moment trembles ere it pass away.
O grant me service that shall come between,
And spare the cloudless summer of thy day!

Or can thy clear compassion thus descry
Afar the shadow of our mortality?

VI

L'AMOUR S'AMUSE

I KNOW not if at all thy spirit moves
Ever to meet with mine, so cold and still
Thou art to outward seeming : thou dost thrill
These chords to utterance : but thy touch reproves !

Yet, if thou art unsphered from human loves,
I see thee turn from this autumnal hill,
Tears in thine eyes suffused, and all the chill
And ruinous whirl of leaves thy pity proves.

So still, so cold thou art, O Lady fair !
So art thou fenced with scorn, O Lady proud !
Thou art of earth, and yet withal dost share
Some kinship wherewith men are not endowed :

Go forth, go forth ! my heart, thy storms declare
Thou too canst perish—O be ruth avowed !

VI

LUX MUNDI

SO hath thy sweet possessive face mine eyes
That in all beauty I see none but thee:
All things are symbolled in thy dear disguise,
Worlds that have been, and worlds that are to be:

Thou art the prism wherein proud Time doth turn
His bright perfections to each several hue;
Thine is the lustre wherewith all may burn,
Thou art the congress of their retinue:

O, if the sick might fly to Jordan stream,
Or if Scamander could with grace endow,
I at thy springs of light may yet redeem
The loathly darknesses this soul doth show;

Heal me, and make me clear, and calm, and free!
So shall I lose myself, find peace with thee.

VIII

EXSUL EGO

THOU art my burg of refuge ; here I cling :
Turn me not back, for the loud world doth stir
Fiercely without thy gates, revenges wing
After me, none but mine own murderer :

Round me the dissonant wilderness pursues ;
Gather me, vagabond, within thy verge ;
So from thy far oasis I refuse
The frustrate anger of the cloudy surge :

Time hath a stationed interim for souls
Where each its ministrant remands from pain ;
Thou art his mediate Angel ; thine the goals
Whither these desert avenues attain :

Love the benign gives sole repose of breath
Save the unsuccourable calms of Death.

IX

NEBENSONNEN

"LOVE! Love!" the spirit cries, through all the span
Of world o'erreaching world, the throngs of space.
"Love!"—in the viewless intermundane place,
"Love!"—in the mould of form leviathan.

"Hear me, O God, if thou art God!" each man
Inwardly cries who bows beneath the face
Of awful ministries through nights and days
Revolving some impenetrable plan.

"Love! Love!"—she stretches arms, foreknowing Mind
Moves always all things; on the vans of hope
She flies from sun to sun, uneased and strange:

Shall all that incommensurable scope
Of search be vain—shall all that yearning find
Tenantless splendours wheresoe'er they range?

X

UMBRA ET IMAGO

CERTAIN that Love is here : as the sea-shell
Recalls on some remote and speechless plain
The far illimitable surge and swell,
And calm inwound amid the murmuring main ;

Or as a lamp within the skies arcane
Beacons a fire more vast and equable ;
As dawn renews more faint the day's refrain,
Cadence of light and music revocable.

Perish ! vain wraith of flame, if Love be vain !
Better the Soul's acquaintance with her pain !
Better, beyond fear-frozen oceans frore,

To hear below the cold Septentrions
The hollow thunder of Hope, where darkness thrones,
Chained in the halls of void for evermore !

XI

ON REFUSAL OF A PICTURE

TAKE back the scroll of that recorded face,
Which neither Time nor thou for death canst
choose!
Long since the image thou canst not retrace
On this quick heart is graven thou dost refuse;

Long since the missal that thine eyes illume
I learnt, ere thou denial learn'st to prayer,
Long since each line and light its leaves assume,
Its stainless margins, are transfigured there:

Shall I ask false presentment of that form,—
I, who have pored on those authentic brows?
I, who have seen their calm, their smile, their storm
Shall I receive the Idol this foreshows?

Nay! sure remembrance shall embalm more sure
Thy beauty's state than this pale portraiture.

XII

SOULS ALONE

O HEART—O Heart! is it thy heart or mine—
Thy heart or mine, not great enough for Love?
We—are *we* shadowy wraiths the winds confine?
Can *we* no nothingness of distance prove?

Must we too agitate the airy streams,
Impotent, from commutual course debarred?
Night's wrack, lost jetsam on the flood of dreams,
Phantoms exanimate, whom worlds discard?

Hath this dull screen of sense no door of change
For spirits barricadoed—hath the power
Of pride no bridle? untranslated, strange,
Must we consume ourselves, whom voids devour?

Is self insuperable? naught the woe
Of tears?—Thou answerest not! nor thy tears flow!

XIII

JETZT WOHIN?

Du stolzes Herz, du hast es ja gewollt!
Du wolltest glucklich sein, unendlich glücklich,
Oder unendlich elend, stolzes Herz!

LET us go back, my heart, there is no home
Before us any more, no joy to bring.
Our bower of leaves is bare, all throats that sing
To-night are flown, far from the land we roam.

Darkness falls downward now, and we are come
Unto this pathless place, where shadows cling
Fearful and fraught with omen, where the wing
Of Grief broods low on all the air laid dumb.

Let us turn hence, my heart, we still can turn,
And search old paths we knew, and find our star,
If there be any star our eyes discern:

The light of yesterday, our guide from far
Is fallen, is fallen, an orb no other morn
Waits to restore behind yon severing bar.

XIV

METEMPSYCHOSIS

I WOULD to God in some deep garden-close
Even thy beauty in its flower were sown !
Where I in death should dwell, an yew that throws
Its circling shadow where thou liest alone.

There all should take thy presence—night and morn
In briefest passages should share thy dreaming ;
The golden grasses, paler poppies born
Of thy forgetfulness, thy spirit's seeming :

Ah say ! would old grief waken ? all night long
The nightingale some maze of woe would trace,
Close silence call to mind one broken song,
And shattered roses wear thy perished face ?

Round us, though none came by to part again,
Still would the volleying wind beat storms of pain ?

XV

ETERNO SOSPIRO MIO

I SAID : " I too can set my heart to school
And move regardless in the Portico.
Passion's pale tyranny shall rage below,
And old rebellion learn the yoke of rule."

O new revolt most proud and pitiful !
And solemn mockery where the Sages go !
And vain indifference that the soul would show,
And fiery tomb of spirit their death would cool !

What thrills the soundless apathetic hours,
And wakes the whirlwind of the hollowing flame,
And shivers o'er the darkened fount of tears ?

A voice, a wraith, a shadow ! a whispered name !
Silence, and night—the scent of happy flowers,
A little drift of the memory of past years !

XVI

LOSS

A DOUBLE loss is mine, for now no more
When long-with-love-acquainted days return,
And morning worlds have joy, I can discern
The feet of angels on earth's heavenly floor.

Before mine eyes thy light's descending shades
No pomp of hue or form may pass again ;
They gaze on flower and field—in vain ! in vain !
The unimaginable pageant fades !

Even the low timbrel of the tremulous stream
Is grief's remembrancer, o'erpassing word ;
And where the breeze of evening breathes its dream
Its shaken sorrows all our past record ;

All is a broken tune, a song forgot ;
O Love, though all be there, yet Thou art not !

XVII

PALINODE

WITH what wild speech I flout the serene air,
As though thou wert some angel charged
with woe!
I, above any man who knows despair,
That should cast back the lie—It is not so!

Not ever spirit since earth's earliest sorrow
Hath so dealt tenderly a soul to save;
Pity's keen edge could from thy saintness borrow
A salve to heal the wound it must engrave:

Though thou, a passenger beyond the pale
Of these dim boundaries, with saffron morn
Ascendedst far, and from that non-pareil
Of haloed calm a fevered shaft was borne,

It was the arrowy Dawn and bow of rain,
Chasing scathed night, that shot this stroke of pain.

XVIII

RISORGIMENTO

IS it for this I walk among the stars?
Command to thraldom most obsequious laws?
To fling up idle hands, to twitch at straws,
And swallow ashes after flame that mars?

Is it that with weak wail about the bars
I sue of circumstance, entreat the cause
Self against worlds? echo the thin applause
Of forced self-pity to her counsellors?

Rather, ye Winds, beat back this dissonant breath!
Learn me your silence! ye who once have trod
Loud ocean's dim pavilions, swept the flood
Scanning the turbulent roar and wash of death;

Yet sudden bow down at pause, to hear what saith
The unuttered awe—the reticence of God!

XIX

ANTERÔS

THIS path we rode; now silent and forlorn
Of her, the garland of the glorying year.
How the brown gold is gone! how late and drear
These chattering leafy ghosts wail days outworn!

These trees, survivors of some gladness torn
From agonised arms, stand mute to memory, sere,
Starker against the wind, whose blast severe
Shatters the tokens of the hours they mourn.

Dead leaves of yesterday, dead winds of spring,
Too late, too late ye would your theme extend!
Wherefore, lean wraiths, so slow to make an end?
What! round your shivering hedgerows still ye cling?—

But thou, poor stammerer of a bygone thing,
Learn that the Past is past! and hath no friend.

XX

EIDOLON

WHEREFORE to-night, beautiful Pallas-face,
Passionless marble face, and calm gray eyes?
I know the soul no moment would efface,
And thee the grave's deep dream shall idolise!

But now I charge thee by our sad farewell,
And solemn histories of love lived in vain,
What is there, O mine Idol, left to tell?
Are we not all acquainted with our pain?

There is little that thou canst ask, or I bestow,
O wherewithal to give, or what require?—
Strange, faint and strange—vague ghosts of long ago
Thronging the wandering dawn of our day's desire!

Flying with silent eyes, ere the eaves awaken,
When darkness dies, and the seas and the stars are
shaken.

XXI

SUNT APUD INFERNOS

WHAT splendid faces are among the Dead.
Beauty lives lustreless in their sad eyes !
See ! where the shadow of death's whirlwind flies !
They pass like flame, and are disquieted.

Love is immortal : when they loved they said
" Behold Love's loveliness that never dies."
Now we are wise, my Dear, we are more wise !
Now, when the night lies cold about our head,

Round us the stars are watch-lights, and the winds
Syllable burial, dwindling suns presage.
Deep, deep ! my love ! deep down, the spirit finds
Rest that for ever must her thirst assuage.

Oceans, and winds, and stars that pass us by,
Yet we drank once of immortality !

XXII

DI MONDO IN MONDO

THERE are a million planets set in heaven asunder,
And in the wide wide world but one sole sky of love!
Then what of the wreck of hopes adrift hereunder
Hence through the sapphire main of heaven that move?

Though uttermost faith be shaken, the soul's possession
Perish as sound or snow, or the flower of flame;
Though the bowl of gold be broken, the wind of passion
Deep and divine, shall fail, nor be known by name;

Let the marred earth tremble and pass, in the calm hereafter
Thou too shalt know and be known on a mightier star!
Be the praise of Love's farther spheres, be the light of laughter,
Be more than the eye hath seen in thine avatar.

My spirit beholds in thine her salvatory;
In the travail of former earth a far-sought story!

XXIII

EXCLUSIVENESS

Già si chinava ad abbraciar li piedi
. . . . ma e' gli disse : "Frate,
Non far, chè tu se' ombra, ed ombra vedi."

Purg. xxi.

AH no ! 'twixt soul and soul is no exchange.
The incommunicable shores of space
Lie vastly sundered, and the stars' embrace
Receives impediment where'er they range.

Each unto each moves self-fulfilled and strange,
Engulfed, unanswering, dumb ; and tho' they trace
Aerial parallels within the race,
Fore-ordered also is this fault of change.

Each his own oriflamme twin selves must bear ;
Indifferent each dividual flight must urge :
Hardly, when wide their trammelled paths diverge,
Some dim remembrance makes their souls aware

How, through the eddying gloom and obvious surge
From the same Whence they err to the same Where.

XXIV

SELF-SEEKING

I DARED to near the chalice of thy heart,
Who craved not love, but life's cold anodyne:
I asked thy spells against the meaner smart
And warp of spirits poor, remote from thine.

Mine own in that communion clear and free
I sought, sequestered in thy harbouring skies,
Who wert the firmament I did o'ersee,
Completion vast of insufficiencies:

Alas, 'mid murmuring of Love's undertone
Strove the slow sibilant theme of private pain;
O'er his proud interchange hoarse malison
From the world's highway roused his deep disdain:

He who hath sought his own his own shall lose;
His heart's disburdenment the spheres refuse!

XXV

EPILOGUE

AS on an arras some romance outworn
Shivers where late the lute-voiced minstrel sang;
So in life's festal chamber now must hang
Love's history, impiteously forsworn.

Love, nay Life's self is dead; auroral morn
Knows them no more: where the clear laughter rang,
Dissonant through void galleries with fierce clang,
Raucous, the wind storms querulous and forlorn.

All, all are gone: yet these purpureal hills
To-night at sundown wear their chrism of gold;
Once more shall hear the silvery voice of streams
Gladdening ere the abysmal silence chills.

Once more the World-Spirit sleeps, once more hath dreams;
Once more Spring's clarion blows, who grows not old.

THE DEAD MERE

FAR in the land of Sighs
Glooms a sad mere :
Round it the wild wind dies,
And the wild birds steer.

At grey dusk the sea-mew screams,
Wheeling alone ;
A ghost from the coast of dreams
On darkness blown.

Grey are the mists above
That hasten so !
And ashen grey the shores thereof,
And its heart below.

SLEEPLESS DAWN

DEAR Sleep, sweet Sleep, shy difficult visitant
For ever dallying by with wandering wing!
See! the hours million-eyed and vigilant
Shiver, and at the pane the swallows sing.

Look—the white-handed dawn flies up the sea!
Vain Sleep, strange Sleep! wilt thou too always flee?

Out of the wide-wayed Night a whisper fell:
"Soon the great Dark draws nigh: thou shalt sleep
well."

DEATH'S EGOIST

LOVE hath a folly, and fond imagining :
Ever, when men must die, to darkness turn,
O still remember me ! each one must yearn,
Forget not yet : it is a little thing !

But ye who loved, when love's last stratagem
Is spent in vain, and on the looming strand
Washed by the inveterate wave, ye sigh farewell,
Heed ye no more, to pardon or condemn !
Let the boon Night fall silent and unscanned :
Set not on that hushed coast grief's sentinel !

And yet !—ah yet ! O Thou who still shalt dwell
Far in the light of land and glory of dreams,
When the year wakes with voices through the streams,
Remember thou this once, *There* is no spring.

PENUMBRA MORTIS

LET us go up, my heart, go hence, return :
Dusk is the spirit's home ; thou too shalt learn
How many tears are shed :
Little avail the dead.

It is enough, O soul, bow down, return.
Wide is the silence of their realm forlorn :
Let the last word be said ;
Silence befits their bed.

Far past, from many lands, yon equal moon
Silent beheld shrill throngs that importune :
The eyes of Death are still ;
All things she must fulfil.

A time, and times—they shall have sleep with whom
Mourners make wail : ere morn, a little room !
Thou art their dust inurned :
At even be these returned.

Wherefore so lost, or unto whom complain?
All would make stay; and all is naught, and vain.
Suns must pass by, and seas;
Man hath his path with these.

Task not the soul! she knows, thy speech is well.
It is a plaint of old; unalterable.
For ah, how newly whelms
Each step in these vague realms!

GREEK EPITAPHS

ON THE SPARTAN DEAD AT THERMOPYLÆ

(*Simonides*)

TELL the Laconians, thou who travellest near,
We lie, obedient to their orders, here.

IN THE BORGHESE GARDENS AT ROME

Sweet-voiced Musa, violet-eyed,
Voiceless here the grave doth hide :
Here the nightingale of Fame
Sudden to stony silence came.
Fair marvellous Musa ! upon thee
May the dust lie tenderly !

ON SHIPWRECKED SAILORS

I. (*Callimachus*)

Who gave him burial ?—Lifeless on the shore
Lycormas found me ; heaped the mound ye see :
Wailing his own sad chance, who evermore
Drifts like a sea-gull o'er the homeless sea.

2. (*Theodorides*)

My Tomb thou seest : my Grave is ocean's ken :
But thou, sail on !
We perished, while the ships of other men
Their harbours won.

3

Ask not, O mariner, whose tomb is here :
Be thine own hap upon a kinder sea.

ON THE GRAVE OF AN ATHENIAN AT MEROË

Straight must the road to Hades be,
From Athens or from Meroë :
Fret not to die so far from home ;
From each land blows one wind of doom.

TINTORETTO, LAST JUDGMENT

S. MADONNA DEL ORTO, VENICE

"Vox Domini super aquas, Deus majestatis intonuit . . . vox Domini confringentis cedros . . . vox Domini concutientis desertum . . . sedebit Dominus rex in aeternum." *Ps. xxviii.*

FLAME! in rushing of wind, with clangour of wings,
Terrible, doomed, the shadow of wrath to come!
Powers of the air are loosed, the skies succumb,
Phials outpour before the King of kings.

Fallen are the stars, even as the Fig-tree flings
Fruitage before her time; lo, all the sum
Of ruining worlds commoved and cumbersome
Passeth o'erwhelmed beneath the deep sea-springs

It is that Master's dream, erewhile who saw
The young god's bridal by the Adrian strand;
Again beheld, as John, the doors thrown wide

Of the Eternal City, and the awe
Of that august Apocalypse had scanned
Saints in their day desired of old, and died.

IN CHURCH

THIS is the hollowed cross of stone ;
Enter to-day, it is God's house ;
Here it is meet we make our moan,—
Ah, but the world is glorious !

II

Here shall the priests with stricken tone
Lead in the prayers dolorous :
" *Miserere !* Christ carven in stone !
Lord, have mercy upon us ! "

III

Mother of God, we here enthrone
Thee, thy slain Son, within thy house.
Have we not made it, a tomb of stone,
From all the garish field shut close ?

IV

Sorrowful Saints, ye too have known
  The woful way, and clamorous ;
Hearken from where ye brood alone
  Into our gloom, but far from us !

V

Come, let us call, and cast us prone,
  We that have sinned and are infamous !
Without in the world the flowers are blown,
  And the glad sun shines and is glorious.

NOCTURN

BEAUTIFUL-WINGED Wind, wizard of the mountains!
Where the tall pine-trees murmur round the homestead,
Wandering Night-Wind, breathe upon thy hillsides
Balmily round her!

Thou who receivest all the secret voices,
Hauntest the tarns, dost whisper from the snow-drifts,
Pass thro' her slumber,—breathe! whate'er her dreams be
I have divined them!

God of the gloaming, master of deep music!
Calling to mind the things that were, and are not,
Sweep thro' the valley, touch thy silver lute-strings,
She will remember.

She will arise, and at the latticed casement
Turn to the stars, their interchange of brightness,
Muse as she hears her dream amid thy music
Falling and dying!

SEA SAPPHICS

IN the twilight late, on the windy foreland,
Stands a youth, a maiden, with eyes awakened,
Some dark shameful shadow before them, weeps with
Passionate pleading.

Pale—her hair, the wonderful web, unravelled,
Scoffed at, spurned by every blast blown seaward,
Round her rings unquenchable mocking laughter
Under the sea-caves.

Far at sea the fisherman labours, vainly
Scans the west, and clenches in vain the rudder;
Sea and wind, the hosts unappeased of heaven
Drive him before them.

Sea and wind assail him, the darkness gathers,
Stout of heart, uncompassed, unheard, unaided,
Type of heroes—ah, unheroic, nameless,
This one must labour!

Here the bay sweeps landward, the lamps uncertain
Quiver to and fro in the gloaming hamlet :
Death is it, or birth, in the cottage yonder,
There, where the lights are ?

Death or birth—'tis one ! for with tears and crying
Man lays hold on life, and with tears releases :
Long since with inflexible pen was written
Travail and labour !

Far above them stretch the unfathomed heavens !
There Arcturus dwells ; the divine Orion,
Silver-sandalled, crowned with his golden headband,
Urges the quarry.

There the stately Pleiades, peerless, queenly,
Watch with smiles well-pleased the unfailing huntsman,
Or within their polished ambrosial chambers
Rest in the noonday.

There the Gods and Goddesses, known of no man,
Painless dwell, the beautiful lords of being,
Time is exiled far from their waveless spaces,
Silent, eternal.

NOBILITY

NOT thine the restless pageantry of place,
Not thine the loud world's praise, and homage vain !
But God hath set upon thy starry face
The rank of suffering, the high birth of Pain.

LOVE'S DIVINITY

LOVE is God, saith the dreamer on the steep
Of dreams; it hath been, shall be, and is now
Until deep call to a diviner deep
Than thou.

EVIL BEAUTY

I

I MUSE upon your face, its great array ;
Than all these lesser faces far more fair—
Than any image of deep dream more rare,
And feel the bitterness of slow dismay.

The glamour of corruption and decay
Lures where a spectre dwells that signs, "Beware !"
Through all the mazes of that shadowing hair
Shed like starred twilight round the brows of day.

Strange ! that this fatal loveliness is thine ;
And thine the violet eyes and spiral hair
Constraining, snake-like, men unto their snare,
And binding them with bands made fast and fine ;

That Beauty parasite should so entwine
Her arms about a dead soul's sepulchre.

EVIL BEAUTY

II

I WOULD that God, when in thine hour of birth,
He touched with light the well-springs of thine eyes,
And scattered dust of gold in rich disguise
On his frail sculpture of consummate earth,—

I would that He, seeing the awful dearth
Within that house dispirited, that prize
Of clay Love leaves forlorn, yea, shall despise,
Had made it, habited, a little worth!

Divine the Form remains! though Beauty's pride
Insolent to the place of soul hath clomb;
The dust of man is thrall, unblest, unfree:

Ah! 'mid that forest of the wine-dark sea
So to the bright-haired Goddess vainly cried
The islanders of her Ææan home!

ON HEARING THE LATE MR ARNOLD MISPRAISED

TO them some subtle sophist of the schools!
Or mere light-witted trifler of the pen!
Or rash upheaver of old gods that men
Imaged from their own likenesses and rules!

As one should smite with pebbles the occult pools
Where in life's cavernous depths its denizen
Glasses—himself, and dreams that to his ken
The unread deeps lie open, for wise and fools!

Such have these deemed him! The world hath not gaged
Them that escape it. Hope and faith—ah! how
Shall these win thine? or through the loveless brain

The soul that fed with yearning unassuaged
Beneath the calm of that benignant brow
The pulse of irremediable pain?

TO A MUSICIAN

NOT so! none hath forgot her tale of pain.
Not that dark martyrdom, the kiss of hate;
The slow deceit of nations lain in wait
Year upon evil year, the masque of Cain.

Not long, O Poet, shall their eyes profane
Behold defeat of passion consecrate;
Ay, though the sword supreme shall cleave debate
From dull Propontis to the Atlantic main!

Great ancestry is yours, victors, who fell!
Heroes! the Gods of battle intermix
High pledge of sonship in your blood outpoured!

Shrined in your hearts, lord of a mighty spell,
Ye bear Her image, Freedom's crucifix:
We bow before that Life-in-death adored!

MUNICH, *July* 1893.

ON A BUST OF LUCIUS CORNELIUS SULLA

(VATICAN)

'TIS he! again the arrowy lightnings wing!
He wears an indifferent thunder, as of old.
Something yet lacks, they trembled to behold,
That Pontic Soldan, that Numidian King:

The eyes intolerable, the vocal ring,
The umber flame, the pallid hair of gold,—
Of him who more than barbaries controlled,
Peace at whose nod her yoke on Rome would fling.

Nathless he gaged, unvanquished Lord of war,
Strife's worth, outweighed the slender scales of name,
Bare all the wreaths of glory, saw, and smiled;

Libation poured where Cuman vineyards are,
Murmuring, who worlds of East and West did tame,
Call Pompey great! bid me live Fortune's child!

THE SAME, CONTINUED

"CHANCE rules," he said: a lion by her throne
He stood, the fearful guardian of her state;
Who knew to curb with brassy thongs of Fate,
And make her proud dominion share his own.

He willed, with Gods, the event; therefore alone
On earth insuperable, predestinate,
Cruelly bound Rome's anarchs captivate,
Regent of Law upon a world o'erthrown.

Yet, in mid pomp, in his pride plenilune,
He loathed the husks of power. Upon a day
He stood above that turbulent people spurned;

"The Law remains! doth any importune?"
Not one made answer. On his Campanian way
He to his olived home private returned.

MANQUÉS

SOME Jester set the thing to be ;
Beggared them at Love's treasury.

She loved another ; thus her heart
Was doubly strange, twice walled apart.

They pass together from the gate :
Bow down, proud head, bow down to Fate !

Fate's Jester else—nay, time is long !
Cap and bells by the chariot thong !

Say nothing, heart, for her sweet sake :
Keep silence now ; in stillness break.

Christ ! a soul starves : it cries for food—
She hath no love but her love of God !

Many a door men stand without :
Each knows—and lives. The years draw out.

DHYÂNA

THE world desired but now is drowned
Within this world that did but seem ;
With muffled whirr the wheels of sound
Revolve within the orb of dream,
Remembered voices murmur here
From spaces far, yet sweet and near.

Here, as some planet poised, I lie,
A realm unknown on either hand ;
In the vague deeps the shadows shy
Flit to and fro, at high command,
Mysterious messengers, in gloom
Arrayed, but whither—and from whom ?

Desire and pain, the envious Powers
Invade not here, nor tide and time,

On this calm steep the weary Hours
Avail not with their load to climb ;
And here, unvext with yea or nay,
Strong lucid silences bear sway.

Shall not the spirit know its home
Even tho' it scarce remembered be ?
The loud streams from the cataracts foam
And still their chafing near the sea :
Beyond the sweep of doom or date
The wide familiar waters wait.

After vain journeying with regrets,
Sad guides ! she sees the longed-for strand,
As merchants sight the minarets,
Across the wastes, of Samarkand,
And falling down with faces bowed,
Praise the High God with praises loud.

Spirit of Peace ! in whose far crown
This being that doth change and fret,
And smile, and weep, and pale, and frown,
Is as a stone unquiet set,
Though that high front it doth profane,
O cast it not from thee again !

There let it be, and overflow
With thy diviner light alone,
And in that light forget to know
The lesser flames it doth disown,
No more respondent to their fires,
But one with all that it desires !

I SAW the Children of Night hastening away.
The Night sent them forth; to the Night in a little while they returned; they clung to the garments of Night.

The Night awaited her sons' return.
Her eyes were stars; but the stars perished slowly away,
And her children, returning, saw that the Night was blind.

Hastening away!
The Night sent them forth: to the Night in a little while they returned; they slept on the bosom of Night!

Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain.

MOSES

THE hour draws near ; it is the hour foretold !
For ere the host was marshalled, before at dawn
I lifted up my voice in charge extreme,
The mandate of the Lord to Abarim,
And Pisgah, tow'r of Moab, imperative came,
Closing the gates upon the journey of years.

So first in Edom, at the height of Hor,
Was Amram's son from the hushed camp withdrawn :
Because in Kadesh, when the people cried
Beside the wilderness of Zin, for vine
And fig, regretful of the watery Nile ;
And we, upbraiding, smote on the barren rock,
Incredulous, tainting the wave of strife,
Nor gave God glory,—then the Eternal spake,
" Stiff-necked and vain ! surely ye shall not lead
Israel to promise, though ye bare the day's
Weightiest burden, disponents both of law,
Pleading admitted to the Cloud and Fire.

Ye too are of that generation doomed
(Exiles that murmured with reverted eyes,
Tried by the sword, harnessed to usual war)
To wander devious in the Arab sand
And strew the abhorrent waste with Abraham's bones.
Jordan ye shall not cross, nor tread that Land
Goodly and fair ; yet the wished prospect wide,
Strongly desired, this thou shalt sure behold
Over against Bethpeor, ere thou die."

It is the hour supreme, the hour foretold !
Out of these plains of Moab I ascend
To that high Mount which spies the farthest bounds
Lying remote from Hebron unto Dan,
Lebanon, Zoar, and the outer sea.
Yet is mine eye not dim, that erewhile saw
Israel enduring, nor this strong right hand
Less potent now, than when in Rephidim
Amalek from the idle desert came,
Adverse to the Eternal ; and these arms
Firmly upborne, grasping the sovran Rod,
O'erstretched the revocable tide of war,
Held the embattled hill, and smote him prone.

"I Am," He said, "and I, the Eternal Am,
Have seen your travail in the stranger's land,
Your yoke ignoble and your tasks obscure :
Behold ! from vile endurance I will bring
The seed of Jacob ; hence will I surely lead
To coasts your fathers held ; the land foretold
To Abraham in Haran, upon the plain,
Journeying toward this Ham ; again renewed
In Mamre, when the horror of darkness fell,
And the lamp passed between the smoking fires.
Me Jacob heard, under the filmy stair
Out of the gate of heaven, what time he sought
The Aramean through Padanaram field ;
And last from Mahanaim southward bound
Beside the ford of Jabbok all night long
Withstood the Adversary dim, unnamed,
Till at the dawn of morning, ere He turned,
He blessed him, 'Thou art Israel : go : prevail !'"

A spirit passed upon you, present shame
And loathing of long exile : each recalled
The oaths to Joseph sworn, his coffered bones,
Old prophecies portending greater things,

Utter confusion in the streams of Nile.
Out of the house of bondage we arose
And yearned for home : yet still the obdurate arm
Of Egypt pressed us sore. But horror seized
The lords of Pharaoh when the ensanguined stains
Of hyssop on the lintel scatheless held
The doors of Israel ; while the Destroyer swept
Terrible through still cities, smiting down
The first-born son : then lamentations loud
In street and courtyard clamoured round their king
Bowed over his dead child : he murmured, " Go ! "

So we arose, and took toward the wild,
Out of the land of Ham our march obscure.
By night we stayed not, for the vengeance dire
Of Egypt followed, to incarnadine
The sands with overthrow. Above our van
Far on the eastern sky hung stern and sure
By day the Pillar of Cloud, by night of Flame,
Lightening the lurid sands, till near the sea
It paused, the foe behind. But Pharaoh saw
Trembling, the Angel of God remove at dawn,
Passing above 'twixt camp and camp confused ;

While o'er the eastward sea I stretched this Rod,
Constant, from whence a great wind rose, and raged
All of that day and even ; till morning came
Showing the waters walled on either arm,
Compact, colossal, and dry land between.
Thus we passed by, and from the farther shore
Egypt pursuing in mid way beheld
Fiercely spurred on by hate, yet numb with fear.
Once more I stretched these hands, and lo, once more
With mighty roar of waters the high seas
From either hand, drowning their shouts of woe,
Rushed thunderous upon their file of war,
And 'whelmed that proud array. For when at noon
The sojourners of Goshen turned and saw,
Before our eyes, northward and southward far
Rolled the wide spaces of the ocean foam.
So in a former world Noah beheld
The gates of heaven opened, and the seas
Vastly commoved, and all their springs profound
Loosened in flood perturbed and tempests blown.
So fell Gomorrah, on her boasted plain
Drowned with salt flood, where the bituminous wave
Sulphureous roams under a brazen sky.

And so the Giants and their sons renowned
Strove with Jehovah, who with penal ire
Thrust them beneath sepulchral seas submerged,
And the deep sways above their homeless bones.

Yet until now, saving the few of old
Who knew Him? but in wind and mutable flame
He swept the gorges of the terrible hills
Or throned himself over the void of air.
Now who shall say, "We found him not, nor knew"?
In Law appears the Eternal, by the mind
Of man feebly conceived, and darkly seen;
Enduring, scriptured and unscriptured, breath
And oracle of being, God himself,
Dweller in stars, moving among all worlds,
Mind amid suns and seas, Ruler unchanged.
They heard not only affirmation sealed
In stony Sinai, where the thunders rolled
From crag to crag, uttered on distant seas,
But always o'er the Tabernacle closed
About the Ark of Covenant, where stand
The golden Cherubim with wings outspread,
Shadowing the Mercy-seat, perpetual hung

The Cloud apparent, with alternate fire.
Saw ye not also high anger unassuaged
Avenging leap from heaven? Again from Tamar
The headstrong would precipitate their arms
Despite command, though the Ark stayed behind
Their rash invasion: then the battailous God
Went not before them: haughty Canaan rose,
And smote them on the hillsides fleeing down
From Ziph to Hormah, in the enemy's land.
He fed you with the bread of angels, strewn
In the sparse desert; and in Midian first,
After among the sons of Esau, warred
Before his chosen with dispersion dire.
Ammon, and Amorite, and Anakim,
All did withstand you, and still ye have prevailed!
Moreover Moab, where her wizard came,
Balaam, son of Beor, heard him divine
Perversely on the mountains, looking forth
From Bamoth-Baal! yea, perverse he saw
The refuge of the Covenant endure,
The Eternal God our succour; far below
Stretched out, the everlasting arms! they saw
The Star of Israel rise, of Ishmael wane,

The presence of the Highest water him,
As gardens by the river-side, and trees
Of aloes on the cedar-scented streams,
Whether by Arnon camped, or round high Ar,
Or through the wilderness of Paran drawn,
Etham, or Tarah, or the hills of Seir.

Behold, fulfilment comes; but I decline
Out of the battle; and toward my place
Others aspire, who followed not the Cloud
From the beginning, not that index sheer
Of constant flame, guiding the night of old.
Well am I named *Withdrawn*, so soon received
First from the perilous flood and reedy home,
Again from Egypt called, as Abraham
Out of Chaldean Ur, to Haran led:
Who yet once more within the mount of God
Witnessed the Presence unendured, and walked
Before the Countenance that slew, the light
And sapphire brightness; or in darkness heard—
Not twice, nor thrice,—between the Cherubim,
The Voice of yore that thundered, now still and calm,

Dividing silence ; oft as I made resort
To that illuminable gloom, where souls
See clearer far than in the garish day.

So now towards the night once more Withdrawn,
Let me depart, whence not one man returns :
To that vast house without desire or time,
Noiseless and most obscure, within whose porch
Shines neither sun nor star ; whose vaulted shade
Covers the just and unjust, as now me.
I know not truly whether this be pain
Or great reward ; for strife with men, and strife
With idols raised, vexes the spirit sore.
I know once more that I shall surely see
Unclouded, the most high similitude,
The silent beatific Vision, seen
Not merely by the bodily eye, but rather
Shining in body and soul, communion pure
With body and soul more perfect, clearly known.
I know at sundown, from these iron hills,
On either side the valley of Jordan stream,
Illumed, as Paradise, with penal flame,
An hour I shall behold the Unattained,

Yet past away ; as all these labourings pass,
The fretful and forgetful, dark and day.

Others shall come ; and one, presaging change.—
In parallel and parable obscure
Than this no more : In him shall all men see
Most clearly, yet himself shall see not clear ;
Too light ! too blind !
And now, courage : farewell.

MENS SOLA LOCO NON EXULAT

IS this indeed the end?
The end of all the hours Love interwove
With speech and song, with full and gracious silences?
Yet, O my Loved One, is there aught but Love?

Dost thou think years can bend
This heart to strangeness, or thy new-lit eyes
To wander coldly, as of old, on distances?
Nay, O my Loved One, make not years more wise?

Dost *thou* deem seas can lend
Our souls some disenchantment, or constrain
Thy days from my days, hoarsely drown heart-
utt'rances?
Nay, O my Loved One, surge not seas in vain?

Love! if no prayers may rend
This web asunder the blind Fates inwove,
We are exiled, divided by strange silences,—
Yet, O my Loved One, is there aught but Love?

SONG

IF all the world were mine and thine,
And we two held the years in fee,
Say, would we suffer Love to shine
With us, and share our sovereignty,
If all the world were thine and mine?

If only Love could loose and bind,
And held the all-unbarring key,
Then Love should no more wander blind,
But keep his old large liberty,
If only Love could loose and bind!

If tears were not, and Death were dead,
We two should dwell as Gods, and see
The impotent ages past us tread,
And share our heaven divinely free—
If tears were not, and Death were dead.

SOLES OCCIDERE ET REDIRE POSSUNT

THE wind from heaven descends ;
It sweeps the sombre forest still and lone,
And calls upon innumerous voices dumb,
And strongly agitates those star-set boughs :
Then, on a sudden, forth to icy caves
It passes northward, and the woods are bare.

Each island 'mid the stream
In spring rejoices, whom the tremulous wave
Murmuring circles ; but alas, soon come
Brazen midsummer heats, soon tyrant suns
Draw up those waters, and his joy's no more.

All night the luminous sea
Weaves wizard music round the dreaming land :
But when grey dawn ascends,
Forsakes for ocean disenchanted shores,
To deeper home returns ; the strands are drear.

SOLES OCCIDERE ET REDIRE POSSUNT

Yet wind, nor stream, nor sea
Departs for evermore ; all these return.
None leaves a heart behind, a waking heart
Breaking remembrance in a heart unvisited,
As thou hast left with me.

BALLADE

I SAW in dream, at dead of night,
A throng pass by in woful guise;
Most glorious once, renowned in fight,
The Son of Peleus sped with sighs;
The Tower of Troy, who could suffice
No more, led by his deep despair;
The King of Men, in fierce surprise,—
A woman's hand hath set them there!

With bay and myrtle wreathed, in flight
Again I saw a Band, through skies
That well might soar, but their sad sight
Was turned within, nor strove to rise:
'Twas Shakespeare's self; Lucretius wise;
Rome's Exile; He whose Star wrought care,—
Though the Tuscan clomb to Paradise,
A woman's hand hath set them there!

BALLADE

Woe's me! for many a Peer and Knight,
With Kings far-famed for high emprise,
And many and many a nameless wight,
And Clerks and Scholars past surmise,
From dark to dawn fled by, the prize
Of Grief-in-Death, whom none might spare:
Alack, what pain in memory lies,
A woman's hand hath set them there!

ENVOY

Princess! O thou of almond eyes
And dusky crown of floral hair!
There is another soul to-night that flies,—
A woman's hand hath set him there.

RENOUNCEMENT?

GO past, go past! the world is thine,
Thine is the land, and thine the sea;
Where'er those regal splendours shine
There are the hearts of men unfree.

Go forth, go forth! thou canst not grieve
If one with pain thy path beset;
The court of throngs thou dost receive,
And thou art stationed to forget!

Thou, as some ship that sails the main,
Movest, white-winged, to thy bright goal;
The deep perturbed thou canst refrain,
Round thee the long-tost surges roll;

Round thee the murk and passionate wave
Its waste of foam in vain would fling:
How canst thou hear whate'er it crave,
Thou, in whose ear the breezes sing?

RENOUNCEMENT ?

On through the mirror of dreaming seas
  Thy course to light's horizon bends ;
The shock that forces thy release
  Backward that stress assailant sends.

A moment it doth cease from flow,
  A moment breasts the hurtling wind ;
Then plunges down with sough of woe—
  Lost ! lost ! for ever left behind.

"SAY NOT WHEN SPRING"

SAY not when Spring is flown
Joy, joy is over-past, the year out-worn!
Tarry not thou to mourn,
Nay go, remembering that joy was shown;
Late oleander and pale columbine
Flora leaves by for latter wreaths of thine.

Weep not when Love is dead:
Ah, rather be more dear and tenderer breath
Blown from his place of death,
And be the memoried tomb with rose-leaves spread:
Nay! Gods can never die; with mellowed eyes
He shall move golden through autumnal skies!

TO A CERTAIN LOVE-POET

YOU sing of Love: 'tis well; for who can bend
The stubborn strings to such sweet servitude
With skill more rare, or with more strength endued
A sea of words in passion to expend?

Yet, when I think on mighty tasks undone,
The world's long ages, and man's little day,
The weak and poor that round earth's chariot cling,

I would that ye, who have this skill to sing,
Might fashion forth some more heroic lay,
Some hope triumphant, some true kingdom won!

SPECIMENS OF TRANSLATION FROM LEOPARDI

THE INFINITE

THIS lonely hill was always dear to me:
This hedgerow that defends the wandering eye
From sight of far horizons. Yet when here
Seated in contemplation; when the mind
Imagines space on space, boundless, beyond,
Their sovran silence, their abysmal calm,
The heart is stilled with awe. And while the wind
Moans in the leaves, its voices side by side
Challenge that vast afar. So I recall
Time everlasting, all past seasons dead,
The murmur of living hours, their voice, their sound.
Then the mind sinks in shoreless oceans merged,
Yet makes sweet shipwreck upon those calm seas.

MOON-SET [7]

FAR in the lonely night,
Above the silvery floor of sea and fields,
Where the wind spreads its pinions light,
And where, upon the tranquil wave,
On hills and homesteads, 'mid dark forest-boughs,
A thousand shadowy forms the distance yields,
And darkness peoples her mysterious house;
Attaining heaven's farthest bound
The Moon sinks down into her Alpine cave,
Or in some crevice of the Apennines,
Or breast of Tyrrhene surges infinite:
Then, darkened and discrowned
Of faery splendours all our world declines;
Widowed the night remains:
Only the waggoner upon his road
Pursues with slow regretful strains
The guiding glory towards its far abode.

So fades and disappears
The light of youth, and so abandons time:

Our hopes are winged for other spheres,
And fairest things grow past their prime.
Where we had rested fondest trust
We but discover crumbled dust ;
And life is dulled with years
Uncertain and forlorn, that was sublime.
No more the doubtful traveller foresees
Whither or whence his anxious journey goes,
But vainly seeking, only knows
He treads a tedious track without release ;
And feels forever as he flees
Earth hath for him no home, hath no repose.

The Gods in heaven beheld
Man's fate, alas, too blest, o'er-crowned with mirth ;
And bade Youth follow not life's path, and Eld
Possessed the spirit's dearth !
So was the joy of youth dispelled :
Though joy itself be girt with myriad pains.
For with no mild decree our doom constrains ;
Darkness broods upon the mean
Of life, and souls that pass between
Pale, growing chill as death beneath its wings.

Worthy strong gods we deem,
Of all our ills supreme,
The life-in-death of Age that man must bind :
Age, when the world's desire
Burns, but no hopes inspire,
Age, where the springs of joy no more men find ;
Where happiness their souls must shun,
Yet nevermore an ease from pain is won.

You, O ye hills and shores,
When the pale splendour on the veil of night
Falls from its western height,
Ye shall not long live orphaned of the light !
Soon on another sky the dawn restores
Auroral glories, soon the sequent sun
Returns, and soon with might
Scattereth shafts ethereal ; and anon
Lucent shall flood with flame your floors.
But on mortality, the glory past
That lit its youth, ah never once again
Lightens an orb, nor dawn renews its years !
Unto the end bereaved it shall remain,
And on the night at last
That lowers upon its ages overcast
The Gods have set death's ending, ere it wane.

TO HIMSELF

O WEARY heart, near draws thy long repose !
Thy last illusion, even this is fled ;
This, too, is dead :
And its mortality the spirit knows.

And I, within the breast
I feel desire, with hope illusive, dies.
Sleep and be still, thou who art strange to rest !
Thou in whose struggles vain
Is no reward of pain ;
Nor all the world is worthy of thy sighs !
Naught, hath our life but gall and vanity !
Our earth is dust ! Yet thou—henceforth be calm.
For the last time, despair ! One gift of balm
Fate doles the race of man,—to die.
Thyself henceforth disdain,
Nature, that dark abhorrent Power which brings
The universal rule of pain,
And all the infinite void of things.

NOTES

1.—*The Grave of Mangan.* Page 31

The name of James Clarence Mangan may be unfamiliar to some. I venture, therefore, to transcribe a few words which, printed elsewhere, met with the too generous approval of a scholar and critic who has the first right to speak.—"While most Irish poets were unskilfully labouring in the long monotonous metres of Moore and Poe, Mangan exhibited a metrical power and fertility which have hardly been surpassed in our century, except by Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson, and Mr Swinburne. He remains indeed, with the second and last of these, the only poet of modern times who has used double rhymes in English verse with beauty as well as freedom. His renderings from the Irish prove him of that rare company of men of genius who have been able to transfer the 'very age and body' of another time into their own. For these are of the exceptions to that rule laid down by Dante in the *Convito*, where he says that 'without breaking all its sweetness and harmony no musical language can be done into another tongue.'

"His light seems to me to burn, though with a troubled intensity, among the greater, if more forlorn stars of our Irish constellation. His indeed to the full are the shortcomings of the ardent spirits who rallied round Thomas Davis and the *Nation:* in him are seen the utmost limitations which a lack of concentration and self-criticism, defects of culture and of technical education, can impose on imaginative gifts, naturally of the highest order. Yet have Callanan or Ferguson himself so

vividly called up the Celtic spirit from the dead, or so persuaded it to utter itself in a modern tongue? The magician dwelt entirely in a passionate and tragic past, and himself appeared in our streets like some one of its strange and melancholy shadows. But language on his tongue had that unity and fusion of idea with its form seen only in those masters whose imagination fashions in a white heat, and whose lips have been touched with the coal of fire.

"Perhaps Burke is the only Irishman who equalled Mangan in imaginative genius. Not, certainly, that in other weighty matters he is to be compared with Burke: Mangan is local and national; Burke, voyaging on his stormy oceans, belongs to a wider place and time. For in Mangan the Celtic passion for the past received its most haunting and intense expression. The motto of his book might be one of those lamentations for Delos or Corinth or the Heroes out of the Greek Anthology, or the lines of Victor Hugo singing his *sombre fidélité pour les choses tombées.* May the new Irish literature, to which our enthusiasts eagerly look forward, be in closer relation to the strong human hopes and necessities of our own time, be less devoted to defeat, less abstracted by I know not what vague and indeterminate brooding over

> 'Old, unhappy, far-off things
> And battles long ago!'

May we not have to say of its writers, as Madame de Staël has said of Arnaldo da Brescia and Rienzi, *ils ont pris les souvenirs pour les espérances!* We hear much of the reverence due from us to the past: is there not also a duty of reverence to the future?"

2.—*The Golden Spears.* Page 31

The name of these summits of the Wicklow Mountains in Irish literature and legend. They appeal to a modern imagination as "Sugar-loaf," etc.

3.—*The Waves of Omen.* Page 32

The three "waves (*tonna*) of Eirinn" are familiar in legend. They utter their warning voices on the eve of national disaster. "In the Irish triads the three waves of Eirinn are 'the wave of Tuath, and the wave of Cleena, and the fishy-streaming wave of Inver-Rory.' The site of the first is the great strand of the bay of Dundalk; that of the wave of Cleena is Glandore Harbour, in the County of Cork. 'It emanates from the eastern side of the harbour's entrance, where the cliffs facing the south and south-west are hollowed into caverns, of which Dean Swift has given in his poem, *Carberiae Rupes*, an accurate though general description. When the wind is north-east, off shore, the waves resounding in these caverns, send forth a deep, loud, hollow, monotonous roar, which in a calm night is peculiarly impressive on the imagination, producing sensations either of melancholy or fear.'—*O'Donovan*, Annals of the Four Masters, A.D. 1557. The wave of Inver-Rory is now represented by the 'Tonns,' which send forth their warning voices in almost all weathers from the strand of Magilligan, near the mouth of the river Bann."—*Ferguson.*

4.—*Willy Gilliland.* Page 36

For the history of Willy Gilliland see Sir Samuel Ferguson's well-known ballad.

5.—*And pillow of the canavan.* Page 37

The white downy-tufted bog-cotton.

6.—*As in yon sweep of form.* Page 52

All who are familiar with these beautiful shores will remember how abrupt and precipitous Vesuvius seems on its Neapolitan aspect; and the long harmonious slope with which it descends to meet the sea.

7.—*Moon-set.* Page 146

I have purposely placed this translation after the deeps and solemnities of the last poem. Here the central thought is less remarkable than is usual with Leopardi; but for that very reason the lines are an extreme example of his power of imaginative treatment. No translation can wholly neutralise such art.

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